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FIRST ROUND TABLE LUNCHEON

MR. VEILLER presiding

Monday, June 5, at 1 o'clock

MR. VEILLER :

I am sorry to interfere with your pleasure in conversation, but if we are to have the discussion that I hope we shall, we must begin almost before we begin lunch. I now call upon Dr. Kiefer, of Detroit. The speakers will be limited to three minutes.

DR. KIEFER :

I can tell my story in about one minute. In Detroit there has not been much attention paid to the housing problem, as such, until recently. We have always paid some attention to plumbing. There has been an organized sanitary and plumbing department in Detroit for twelve or fifteen years, and I think it is quite an efficient department. Much work has been done in looking after plumbing in new buildings as well as unsanitary conditions in old ones. But the house problem proper in Detroit is in the shape of old houses formerly occupied by one family which are now being turned over in each case to a number of families. We have a new building code which will take care of some of the conditions in the future, but we have no specific law as to tenements such as has been discussed in this convention. We have general jurisdiction over tenements under our board of health law, which gives us the right to forbid unsanitary conditions. For example, this morning we saw some dark-room conditions here and we saw some that had been corrected. We saw how, under the tenement law here, they had put in a certain amount of glass to bring light from the front or the rear. We have no specific regulation like that in Detroit, but if we found such conditions we would say, "You have got to take that wall out." If the owners did not do so we would go to court with them, and if we could find the kind of

judge who agreed with us as to the unsanitary condition, they would be forced to make correction. That is what I meant when I said the other day that the whole problem to me is a problem of education. If we can get the public sentiment back of us so as to enable us to get a sufficient number of inspectors, we can do the work.

We have at the present time only one sanitary inspector beside the six plumbing inspectors, to look after the condition of plumbing in the old and new houses. We boast of having nearly 500,000 inhabitants. I asked for an extra sanitary inspector for the coming year, and I got him at last. We have done some work and we hope to do more. We now have a housing commission in Detroit, and if they will help us to make sufficient noise so that people will recognize the necessity for this work, I am sure we shall progress much more rapidly than we have done in the past.

MR. MARANI:

The first thing we took up when I was appointed building inspector was the recodification of the law and the making of a building code proper. In connection with that the question of the improvement of the tenement-house section was drawn to our attention by the chamber of commerce of Cleveland, which has done much towards urging the administration to do what is right, and has also helped me in achieving some success in this direction. The tenement section of the code, which has been written in my department, is practically in accordance with Mr. Veiller's book, *The Tenement House Law*. We have added a little to it, but not much. We are like all other building departments, enforcing a \$32,000 code with a \$10 organization.

MR. BALL:

It seems to me the things we are not doing in Chicago are so much greater than the things we are doing, that we have not much to say for ourselves. Those of you who know Chicago will probably characterize it as being a city of great untidiness. We should like to have you come and see that untidiness when it is cured. The only thing that I have against Pittsburgh is that Mr. Beatty is not willing to have people come and see him.

He says, "Come in a couple of years and we will show you what happened." We are glad to have you come to Chicago now. Things are moving there. Our tenement-house law was passed nine years ago. The principal defect was that it was modeled too closely on the New York law of 1901. For example, that law allows the construction of alcove rooms, or did for a year until they found out that they were bad. They cut it out of the New York law, but we kept on in Chicago for seven years, so that we have more alcove rooms in Chicago than we ought to have. We have re-framed our ordinance lately; we have not the advanced results that we ought to get, but we have moved somewhat. We have increased the minimum-size room from seventy to eighty square feet, and I do not think there will be any difficulty in getting eighty-foot rooms. The greatest thing we are doing in Chicago, in comparison with other cities, is in the number of stories. We have not built in ten years half a dozen tenement buildings more than three stories high. We build only three stories high, and the fire limitations which are imposed on a seven-story building in New York city, we have imposed on a four-story building for ten years past. It seems to me that is a lesson for Cincinnati, Cleveland, Detroit and a few other cities; they do not need to build higher than that.

Something has been done by the School of Civics and Philanthropy. We do not know our conditions in Chicago, and one of the principal things that ought to appeal to every one interested in housing conditions is to find out the facts. We do not know how many tenements there are in Chicago. I do not believe you know how many there are in your own city, and if you can learn that, it is worth while.

HON. JOHN J. MURPHY, Commissioner, Tenement House Department, New York City:

I have taken a certain amount of pride in the fact that I am the one tenement-house commissioner in the world. I believe that I am individually and officially unique, and the amount of attention which has been paid to the question in New York I presume exceeds that of any other community in the world.

How big the question is growing any one who looked into the reports of the international conference at Vienna last year must have seen. I recently sent to twenty-five of the leading cities in Europe for copies of their building and housing regulations, their sanitary regulations, and all their rules in regard to fire prevention. I am having those books catalogued and indexed now so that we may be able to form some estimate as to what is being done abroad as compared with what is being done in the city of New York.

The one thing that I should like to dwell upon, and that most emphatically, is the importance of concentration of the work of tenement supervision in a single department. If New York city, from being a horrible example, can claim even to approach to being a shining exemplar to-day, it is because the whole work of tenement-house supervision was concentrated in a single department, comprising the powers of the police department, the health department, the bureau of buildings and the fire department in relation to tenement houses. This concentration of responsibility is, it seems to me, fundamental in working out a proper regulation of tenements in any city. I presume that no city in America has to any extent taken up the problem from the affirmative side. As you know, most of the recent conferences abroad are taken up with questions of philanthropic or municipal benevolence, attempts to solve the problem of insufficient housing either by philanthropic expenditures or municipal housing. These things we have not had to handle in America yet, and therefore our work is more largely critical than constructive, but whatever line we follow, I believe its success must come through recognition of the fact that the powers of the various municipal departments affecting tenement houses should be gathered together under one head, under one direction, and made as concentrated as possible, in order that there may be no possibility of escaping responsibility for bad conditions.

MR. THOMAS JORDAN, Health Department, Boston :

We are rather handicapped in Boston for this reason : when the present building law of Boston was filed, almost all the health laws were put under the building-law code, so that there

is more or less friction in regard to the enforcement of the law, and like most of the other large cities, we do not get sufficient appropriations to carry on the work. We have, at the present time, twenty inspectors, and five police officers. This year we have had a bill before the legislature to increase the number of police officers. Though the bill has been passed, the officers have not yet been assigned to the department, I presume on account of lack of appropriation.

We had a bill put in, making the tenement house in Boston and Massachusetts a three-family house. That bill was defeated largely on account of the building law. The four-family house must be of fireproof construction. When our bill was put into the legislature by the law department, the legal mind who put it in merely changed the word from three to four in the present building code, which made the construction of that sort of building in the outlying districts almost impossible, so the bill was defeated.

We had another bill put in on overcrowding. At the present time the only method we have to restrict overcrowding is to visit the premises and measure the rooms, and where we find the rooms overcrowded, stencil the wall with the number of occupants allowed. If the restrictions are not complied with, we then vacate the premises. This has turned out to be continuous work, as the people engaged in keeping these cheap lodging houses move from place to place. This year we have driven one woman who has been in the business a good many years, from five different locations. We have not found her in the sixth yet, though I have no doubt she is there at the present time. We had a bill making this a criminal offense. The chairman of the board and I appeared before the committee and there was no opposition. In a few weeks we read that the bill was withdrawn. We saw some of the members of the committee, and one of the senators said that they would have the bill reported out. We did not hear from him for two weeks and I called him up. He said the committee would like to go out and see the conditions in the city. They found the conditions worse than they had anticipated, so the bill was reported out, but has not been voted on.

MR. JAMES A. RATH, Honolulu:

One would suppose that with an island of 498 square miles to spread over there would be no need of tenements, but we have them: frame tenements, with people living under the street level, with absolutely no ventilation, though it is needed even more in a sub-tropical climate than in the climate that you have on the mainland. We have no tenement-house law; in fact we have no building law, except a very general one. Studies have been made, however, and as a result of the work of some reformers and Dr. Pratt, of the board of health, who is conversant with conditions there, the last legislature appropriated some \$270,000 to fill in some of our lowlands and to erect suitable buildings for the working classes. The board of health has come out plainly against the tenement, advocating the cottage system. In a warm climate it is almost impossible to build suitable tenements; so the cottage system has been advocated, and I am glad to say that many of our philanthropic men are taking it up and erecting small cottages for families of workmen, renting them as low as \$5 and \$6 a month. These cottages consist of three rooms and a separate bath.

We still have a great deal to do. Our cholera epidemic, which came three months ago, was a blessing in disguise. It really awoke the authorities. We have had a dual system of control, and there was a conflict of authority between the county authorities and the territorial authorities in Honolulu. Between the two stools we nearly fell to the ground. When this cholera epidemic came we lost about thirty people, and as the territorial legislature happened to be in session, the old laws were either amended or superseded by new laws. So to-day the territorial board of health has the supreme voice in all health matters, particularly in regard to buildings.

A new building law is being enacted, much along the lines of some of the states, but, of course, adapted to a sub-tropical climate. So, while we have serious conditions, I am glad to say that we are more hopeful of solving them than we were six months ago.

PROF. IRVING FISHER, Yale University, New Haven :

I do not know whether the chairman meant to be sarcastic, or whether it was a slip of the tongue or the pen, when he said that I have shown you how to *shorten* life. I cannot say that in New Haven we have made great progress in improving tenement-house conditions. This is largely because of the influx of foreign immigration there, an element which has brought up the tenement problem everywhere.

Eight years ago my colleague, Professor Bailey, enlightened us as to the prevalence of dark rooms and bad tenements generally. About four years ago my colleague, Professor Farnam, with the coöperation of the chairman, Mr. Veiller, succeeded in getting through our state legislature a tenement law which, though not so perfect as we should like, is an improvement on anything that the state had had before. We are hoping to secure still further improvement through the enactment of certain amendments which are now under consideration and are being advocated by certain civic bodies in New Haven. Those amendments will provide for better fire protection, abolishing wooden fire escapes, for instance, and will give more room inside and outside of the tenement.

If it is in order, I should like to say a few words on the tenement problem in general, rather than on New Haven's problem in particular, because as a matter of fact, it does not seem to me that it is a local problem but a general problem, due to immigration. One of the delegates remarked this morning: "In small western towns we have precisely the same problems arising as in New York city. This shows that the dark-room evil, for instance, is not due to the overcrowding on the narrow strip of Manhattan Island, but can show itself in small towns in the West, where land is relatively cheap."

It seems to me that the essential nature of the problem is not what it was originally taken to be. The economic demand on the part of the foreign population is for a different standard of housing from that which you and I think is the correct standard, and the tenement problem is really the problem of the better class of the community trying to impose their standards on the

poorer and more ignorant class of the community. It seems to me, therefore, we shall never get any final results in this tenement problem until we go beyond the stage of legislation and of the better execution of laws. We must create a demand upon the part of the immigrants in this country for something better than one-room tenements, and when they recognize that it would be better to live in a pest-house than in a dark one-room tenement, they will not pay rent for dark rooms.

This morning we saw two four-room tenements, one good and one bad, for practically the same rental. Why was this? Because the working people do not recognize the difference in the conditions; that is, ignorance plays a part as well as poverty. I am therefore heartily in favor of those who on Saturday recommended a thorough campaign of education. That must be slow. We must have enforcement of the law; we must have better laws and more appropriations first; but in order to get on a stable basis, we must tell the people what the standards of living are. And in that connection we must improve our own standards. When one class of the community attempts to enforce its standards on the other members of the community, it must be sure of its ground. An attempt to solve the one-room problem by cutting a window so as to let in light is a delusion and a snare; it is not going to prevent tuberculosis or kill many germs or produce any material improvement in decency. Also, when we say that there must be a certain cubic space of air for the individual to breathe, we are on the wrong track. What we want is active ventilation. The small room with the same cubic capacity, without a window, but with a door on either side, will be far more effective. As we saw in one of the remodeled tenements extending through from the front to the rear, the real virtue of the middle room is that it has a window on each side, making a draft.

But we do not yet know the standards of air purity. There is a whole field of standardization which ought to be studied. That feature of the discussion was omitted on Saturday, but I hope before the conference adjourns methods of obtaining proper standards of air purity for housing will be discussed. That is a problem for scientists, and I hope that this conference

will get the coöperation of people who can study the problem from that side.

MR. MAGRUDER:

Baltimore has just reached the culmination of the agitation that has been going on for more than sixty years, resulting in the installation of a sanitary sewer system, a double system, one for storm water, and one for the city sewage. It is to cost \$20,000,000, and that means the beginning of the end of the village system that has been in use in the city for more than a century; and it means that by the end of 1914, under the provisions of the enabling act, 67,000 earth closets will be entirely superseded; they are not only to be abandoned, but to be filled up with pure earth. This means that the tour of inspection which we have just finished this morning, is one that is of vital consequence to the Baltimoreans who are here. We have no such tenements as abound in the city of New York. We have no dumb-bell tenements. I do not think we have a single tenement that is more than five stories high. But we have conditions in houses which do not come within the definition of tenements, and which constitute the great majority of the dwellings in Baltimore, and those conditions are just as intolerable as the conditions that obtain in dwellings which do come under the head of tenements.

The basic improvement is the establishment of the new sewer system, and that will affect every piece of property and every dwelling within the corporate limits of the city, and not merely the tenements. In addition, we have a new housing code which has been in effect for a little less than three years. It has standardized the conditions of living to some degree, although it is by no means perfect. As a result of the housing code, whereas we had no inspectors of housing at all up to a year and a half ago, we now have three inspectors with another twenty-five to be added as soon as possible. The chief of the three inspectors, who is present at this conference, has just informed me that there are now listed in the neighborhood of 3,000 tenements, by which in Baltimore we mean houses containing three or more families. The index cards include details of informa-

tion in regard to these tenements as drawn up according to a fixed schedule. You can see, therefore, that we have gone only so far in the city of Baltimore as to lay a fairly good and broad foundation. We have practically everything yet to do.

MR. J. HAL LYNCH, Housing Committee, Civic League, St. Louis:

In St. Louis a year ago, during the meeting of the National Conference of Charities and Correction, we attempted to show some of our visitors our worst housing conditions. Mr. Veiller and others said that we had some of the worst housing conditions that they had ever seen. Some of these conditions still prevail, but they are not common in our city. A small district which is our Ghetto is in a bad state, but most of the city is in good condition so far as the homes are concerned.

Five years ago there was no building code covering the construction of tenements in any way. The code we have at the present time is a little over three years old. As a building code it is excellent, providing in a fair way for all the necessary sanitary conditions. It is difficult to construct a frame building in our city. Almost every building is required to be brick and we are not allowed to build less than a 13-inch wall in a two-story house. It is contrary to law to use a 9-inch wall except in a small one-story building. Our difficulty has been to pass a retroactive law covering the old conditions. We have been fighting strenuously along this line for four years, but have not, so far, been able to accomplish anything. It has been impossible to pass such laws, and therefore we still have about 12,000 privy vaults in the city. We do not know whether we shall get rid of them soon or not—we hope to. We have gone so far in the matter as to have had at our public hearings in the city hall a gathering which was said to be a mob. The property owners of the district affected were so indignant at our attempt to pass a law doing away with their old vaults that they gathered in large numbers.

Our laws do not permit the building of a tenement house over three stories in height unless it is fireproof. Our fire-escape laws are good. We have no state law covering tenement construction

or building in any way except a fire-escape law. We have a law compelling grocery stores, meat markets and similar places keeping food to screen everything and protect the food. This last year we attempted to pass a law permitting the state board of health to regulate building throughout the state, by rules similar to the laws of Indiana, but we encountered violent opposition and met with defeat on that point, though we hope to do better next time.

MR. JOHN C. LOGAN, Secretary Associated Charities, Atlanta:

We at least have the advantage of thinking we are going to be a big city, and have the housing problem in mind. I was much struck by the remarks of Professor Fisher concerning the standard of living, which is really down at the bottom of this problem, at least as it is with us. We have few dark or airless rooms except those in cellars, and there are few such cellars occupied. But we have a great many small houses in various sections of the city, many of them on alleys in good residential parts of the city, mostly occupied by negroes.

An ordinance was recently passed requiring the laying of water mains and sewers in these alleys, but it seems that the law is not capable of enforcement. The board of health, by securing the passage of the law, shows that it is alive to that problem. I heard one of our directors say that he thought the problem of raising the housing standard of the negro population one of the most important of this day and time. They are making enough money to live comfortably in better quarters, and are simply working less time. The employers, therefore, are feeling this problem in an indirect way.

Last year, the building department secured the passage of a new building law which was based almost entirely on the fire underwriters' code. We attempted to sneak in the more modest provisions of Mr. Veiller's model law, so that we might have no more apartment houses or tenement houses built of wood. The building department, however, had a great many jokers in their own code, and they thought, "If we lengthen the code, the council possibly may read it," while as it stood it might pass without sufficient scrutiny to raise any opposition

whatever. Their estimate of the situation proved to be correct, because there was no fight made on the fire-escape law until after the passage of this ordinance.

MR. ELMER S. FORBES, Housing Committee, Massachusetts Civic League, Boston :

It is not quite true that we have been stirring up all the cities and towns in Massachusetts, but we have been trying to do something. Conferences like this are common, where we gather from all parts of the country to discuss our own problems, but we have been experimenting with conferences of a different sort. The cities have the experts and so they have the advice at hand when they wish to deal with their own troubles. The smaller towns do not have this advantage, and to overcome this handicap in a measure, we have held conferences in a number of places in New England and have asked people to come from the outside to tell them how they can meet the difficulties which they are facing. Several of these have been held in Massachusetts and they have been successful.

They have roused public opinion. They have made citizens see abuses which they had not seen before and have pointed the way to the removal of some of them ; at any rate, the people have learned something of the ways in which the larger communities are at work. I think it is an important movement, and it is certainly one of the ways in which the education of the smaller towns may be successfully carried forward.

MR. FEISS :

I believe that Mr. Veiller's work is the most valuable that is being done definitely on a national scale in the country, because he is bringing to us the kind of assistance which we want, and bringing it in concrete form.

We, in Cleveland, are having the same trouble that you are having in the older communities, namely, we are so busy safeguarding individual and property rights that we are forgetting common human rights. The work that the chamber of commerce through its housing committee has been doing has been particularly in connection with the health board and the building

inspector's office. I hope eventually we can have our own tenement-house commission in the city, and perhaps when our new state code, which is to come up for discussion at the next session, is adopted, we may be able to have this power granted to the cities. Primarily, what we did was to get a law from the state enabling the cities to have their own building codes. Following that, the city of Cleveland engaged an expert to write a code, which is undoubtedly good; in fact it is so good that it is very difficult to keep pace with it, and it has got to be brought down within the power of human possibilities to enforce. The next step we took was to have a statute put on the books enabling us to take care of buildings already in existence. This is going to be enforced through the health board. We shall have, therefore, both a building inspector's office and a health board working at the house problem. This is not an ideal condition, for I believe that the health board should have the sole power; but it was the best we could do under the circumstances. The health board has assigned to it three people for inspection, for supervision of inspection and for the watching of records. We hope to have three or four more inspectors of tenements and housing within the next month.

The building department's code is ready—as soon as it has the O. K. of Mr. Veiller. As soon as that code has been definitely completed by such of us as are working at it, it is ready to go before the city council, and we hope within sixty days to have it ready for operation. I think that is our work in Cleveland up to to-day.

MR. VEILLER:

One thing that the speaker did not mention is this: The chamber of commerce and the big business men of the community are spending most of their time and money doing educational and philanthropic work for the city of Cleveland. When they get together for their meetings, it is 90 per cent those things and about 10 per cent business propositions, as we ordinarily understand the word. They have been successful because they have been modest; they have been willing always to sink their personality; they have never sought credit, glory

or advertisement, but have always pushed to the front the public official who may have been aiding. It seems to me that is a lesson for the whole country.

MRS. GRAY:

We succeeded in getting through our tenement-house law in Kentucky by catching the legislators asleep. The only people who woke up to it were two property owners who lived in Cincinnati. They came down to oppose it, but we got them out of the way. The law calls for a tenement-house inspector, but the city has not appointed one. They say, "Let the inspectors who are already in the health office do that work." The health office has six sanitary inspectors to do the sanitary inspection for the city, and the chief health officer does not seem to think that is enough to get around; it probably is not, although I do not think they work as hard as they could. The only part of our laws enforced is that in regard to new buildings. I believe we have stopped the building of bad tenement houses. We have the alley problem in the city, and we have the negro problem. The great trouble in Louisville is not so much the lack of air as the dilapidation of buildings. Nobody makes any repairs, and the whole theory seems to be to allow the building to go to ruin as badly as it will, and when white people will no longer live in it, let it to colored people. But while the standards of the greater part of our negro population are low, I do not think it fair to regard them as hopeless without giving them a chance. Personally, I believe their standards can readily be raised with a little impetus and oversight from the white people. The living conditions under which the the negro children have been and are being brought up are bad enough to account for any deficiencies at present, but some day the white population will awake to the menace which the disease-ridden products of these unspeakable negro tenements are to the community, and then the theory that "anything is good enough for the negro" will have to go.

MR. HANSON:

Youngstown is half-way between Cleveland and Pittsburgh.

It is not necessary to locate it out in our country, but I suppose it may be here. We have about the same type of people living there that they have in Pittsburgh because we belong to the Pittsburgh district, so-called. We are an iron and steel manufacturing city, so that our population is something like 67 per cent foreign born including almost all nationalities. The city has increased about 78 per cent in population during the last decade, and the building operations do not keep up with this growth of population. The result is, of course, that a large number of buildings are overcrowded, particularly the former good residences in the downtown district which become tenement houses, a usual condition in fast-growing cities of that type.

So, when the associated charities began work there a few years ago, we found that many of the problems were due to bad housing, and we at once began an agitation for improved conditions. Out of that agitation has grown a corporation which calls itself The Modern Homes Company, which was incorporated about a year and a half ago for \$100,000 and has been doing work since, recently increasing its capital stock to \$300,000. It now has six-family houses with a store and meat market to provide the tenants with provisions.

I should like to say a word in regard to the reference which has been made to the need of education of these tenants to higher standards. Last spring we began, in an experimental way, by holding three school-house meetings in rental districts. Eighty-six per cent of the people were renters, and largely foreigners. We had enthusiastic meetings in the school-house, and practically the whole evening was given over to short addresses along the line of the tenants' responsibility and the tenants' part in improving their condition. We had several speeches made in different languages, Polish, Hungarian and Slavic and we had committees appointed which offered prizes for the best improvements during the coming season, so we have begun a campaign of education which we feel sure is worth while, and which we will follow out during the coming year by holding these school-house meetings, perhaps once a month in these purely rental districts, and impressing upon the tenants the idea that much of the improvement rests with them and

must emanate from them. If they improve their houses and the others do the same, it does not make much difference if they move once in a while. They will still come into and share and profit by the efforts of others, while others will follow and profit by their efforts, and even things up.

Also, we are forming an association for a system of reporting upon tenants, which is part of a movement to force those who need coercion. This system will include reports upon the general character of the tenant, his reputation for caring for the property, and his reputation for paying his rent. We have already an organization effected which we think will put this upon an effective basis, enabling us to show to the tenants that it is worth while. The landlords tell us they think they can reduce rents ten per cent, if everyone will work on this matter of reporting the character of the tenants.

MISS EDITH ABBOTT, School of Civics and Philanthropy,
Chicago:

Most of our investigation has been published already, in a series of articles in the *American Journal of Sociology*. We are trying hard to interest the people not already interested in the housing problem, and these articles have been so widely circulated in the form of reprints that it is not necessary to make a further report on them here. We have all ready for publication now the results of the study of a portion of Chicago, which was canvassed by a committee of the City Homes Association ten years ago, and we found in our re-canvass some interesting differences to note. For example, there has been a great improvement in sanitary conditions there, owing to the activity of Mr. Ball, who has been our chief sanitary inspector. We found, however, that overcrowding is worse, and that dilapidation in general has increased.

In these so-called "river wards" in Chicago, we have a large territory which is said to be awaiting a business invasion. When we make any complaint about the condition of the houses there, we are always told that that territory is to be taken over for the use of factories and railroads and that it is therefore not worth while to bother about housing conditions

there. In the meantime more people live there than in any other part of the city. The congestion per block and per acre is much greater there than anywhere else; and as our recent canvass shows, in spite of the fact that more factories are building there and more property is being taken over for business and commercial purposes, more people are continuing to crowd into the old houses than have been there at any other time.

I have to report, to the shame of Chicago, that although we have one of the best sanitary inspectors in the country, a man whom it is a pleasure to find more appreciated here in New York than by our Chicago aldermen, we have not come to the point where we are willing to give him a proper appropriation to do the effective and intelligent work that he is capable of doing. It would be a pleasure to report at the next National Housing Conference that we had given Mr. Ball an adequate number of tenement-house inspectors and given him an opportunity to do his work properly.

I should like to say one word about the relation of the immigrant to the housing problem. I do not wish to contradict anything that Professor Fisher or anyone else has said; but out of my experience as a resident of Hull-House and a member of a district charity committee, I have come to believe that the immigrant is not so ignorant as we often give him credit for being. In Chicago, the one-room tenements are occupied not by immigrants, but by poor and shiftless American families.

Only last week a Hungarian woman came to Hull-House in bitter distress because everything was so dirty here. She had been here less than a year, and she said that in Hungary things were cleaner; here, she said the alleys were dirty and the streets were dirty, the halls of the tenement were dirty, the toilet rooms were dirty, and the same with other things over which the individual tenant had no control. She said she was not accustomed to such things at home. Sometime ago I found in a house on Liberty Street, where there had been a large number of cases of tuberculosis, a poor Russian Jew in the last stages of tuberculosis. He had been in this country less than two years, and his tale was a touching one. He said that before he came here, when he received letters in Russia from his friends

on Liberty Street, he pictured in imagination the beautiful place to which he was going; Liberty Street was a place of glory to him. He imagined a broad avenue with a figure or a statue of liberty, such as he had heard about; but instead he found Liberty Street one of the poorest and meanest streets in the Ghetto; the house and everything about it was dirty, and within two years he had contracted a case of incurable tuberculosis and was dying on Liberty Street.

Nor do I believe it to be true that good houses are as cheap as poor houses and that people live in miserable conditions because they do not care. I am on the committee of the Associated Charities, and I find we have difficulty in moving families out of bad rooms. In getting them into better apartments we have to count on a rent of \$8 instead of \$6, or \$10 instead of \$8. While I welcome any means of improving the condition of the tenements by "teaching the tenants," I do believe that the immigrants themselves feel very keenly the dirt, misery and discomfort under which they live.

DR. JAMES ROBERTS, Medical Health Officer, Hamilton, Ontario:

I am not here to depreciate conditions in my native city, because up to the present time we have not had the tenement-house problem. In the neighboring city of Toronto, with something like 350,000 or 400,000 people, I do not believe that they have a tenement-house problem. So that problem practically does not exist in the Dominion of Canada, except in the city of Montreal.

We have in Hamilton, I might tell you briefly, conditions such as Mr. Davis, of the city of Columbus, outlined. I mean conditions such as you find where there is a rapid influx of foreign population, with insufficient housing. We have two and three families crowded into one house, and it is for the purpose of finding out how best we can prevent such conditions that I have attended your conference. I might say that I am delighted with everything that I have heard, it is so practical. It sends one back feeling that there is a bond of sympathy between us. We go back with better hearts when we find out, as the lady who

has just taken her seat has said, that a gentleman of the activity of Mr. Ball is appreciated better away from home than he is at home. I suppose that is perhaps the case with Kiefer, and Goler, of Rochester, and a great many others, and it probably is the case, as Dr. Fronczak has said, that in a contest for the most unpopular man in our home town we should win hands down. When we find that out it gives us courage. We are not isolated individuals: a man fighting in his native town gets discouraged; when he attends a conference of this kind it strikes him that there are others in precisely the same condition, and it gives him heart and determination to keep on. As health officer for six years in the city of Hamilton, I have learned to believe that all the world loves a fighter, even when he is in the wrong, if he has the courage of his conviction.

My attendance of six years at meetings of the American public health associations, with what I have learned here, has shown me that the people of the United States are alive, as perhaps no other people of the world are alive, to the great evils that are growing up among them, and that they are attacking sociological problems in a manner to make them ultimately the leaders in the social regeneration of all the peoples of the world.

MR. CUTTER E. LOVEJOY, Secretary Housing Commission,
Detroit:

I am glad to report that we in Detroit are all working together for the solution of the housing problem. A little more than a year ago Mr. Veiller was invited to come to Detroit to address a small group of citizens, largely members of the Detroit board of commerce, a body of public-spirited men who are doing the kind of work that I am told the Cleveland chamber of commerce is doing, largely along social and civic lines, with particular attention to commerce. Mr. Veiller's address made so profound an impression upon these gentlemen that they immediately asked him to suggest some plan of action. A housing commission was soon organized and about the first of October we began active work. The plan was to begin at once to find out what we had to do, to study carefully the situation before taking any serious steps, so that a good deal of

time has been spent in discovering our task, and yet along with that we have been making a little progress in active work.

One of our first duties was to consider a new building code, which was at that time before the city council and which has since been adopted. This code is thorough-going, and, so far as new buildings are concerned, quite complete. As respects the sanitation, improvement and maintenance of existing buildings, as well as any effective provision for the enforcement of law, I regard the new building code as seriously deficient. I have brought with me a copy of this ordinance, hoping to get an hour or two with Mr. Veiller, that we may go over the ground together. Detroit has had so moderate and yet so delightful a growth, up to the last ten or fifteen years of her history, that almost no building regulations have been required. Indeed there were no building regulations of any consequence, and I was told that it would be a hopeless search to look for the old building code which this new one supersedes. All I have been able to find, under the guidance of the city authorities, is a fugitive regulation here and there, scattered through the council proceedings. We gave such study to the building code as it was possible to do, comparing it with Mr. Veiller's model law, the New York law, and such other authorities as were available, and by the not unfriendly attitude of the city council we succeeded in getting through fifty-seven amendments to the code as originally proposed. I ought to add, too, that the original authors of the code generously welcomed these additions and heartily coöperated with us in securing their passage. Some of these amendments are of considerable consequence, and we have to our credit several additions and improvements in definition, a generous increase in minimum requirements for street, court and yard spaces, for ceiling heights and window openings, several added provisions for light and ventilation, and for protection or escape in case of fire. Our amendments completely rule out the cellar tenement, make better provision for family and personal privacy, and specify minimum toilet accommodations for families in tenements now existing. We also secured the insertion of a strong section on the enforcement of the law. And so, while the new law is far from ideal, from the

standpoint of the housing expert, it is a magnificent advance over the past, a great credit to its originators, and, we believe, a document much improved by the activities of the housing commission.

Early this spring considerable agitation began over the condition of the alleys. Detroit is possessed of more alleys than any other city of its size in the world. What in some cities would be called minor streets, from fifteen to thirty-five feet wide, are here called alleys. It was found that the alleys were being made the repository for ashes, refuse and rubbish of every conceivable sort. The alleys had come to be an eye-sore to the people of Detroit. Our city boasts of its beauty and of the fact that it is a good place in which to live. Avenues and boulevards are numerous and attractive, but in going about where the alleys could be seen it was discovered that they were in serious condition. It was our good fortune that a number of people became interested, about this time, in cleaning up the alleys—private citizens, officers of the board of health and others. We have an efficient health department which has, at least during the present administration, been active in trying to correct these evils. It fell to the lot of our commission to take a leading part in this alley-cleaning crusade, and a great deal of favorable publicity was given to our work by the daily papers, as the alleys had become the talk of the town, and the efforts we made to remedy their condition seemed to meet the approval of all classes. Not only that, but so much sentiment has been aroused in favor of clean alleys that it seems now as though our people would never be satisfied until some ordinance has been passed providing for the adequate and satisfactory care of alleys.